

# Leadership Versus Personal Life for Female Managers

## Case study Transylvania

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### Introduction

**F**EMALE LEADERSHIP is a long debated subject in the human history. Studies deal with problems that conduct to such a poor representation of women in top management positions. Additionally, the interdependence between having such a position and fertility issues is also of interest, both for developed and underdeveloped countries. That is why the goal of the present study is to assess the demographic and social effects of women's management positions. For this we have conducted a survey on a sample of Romanian women managers, in the North-West Region. We wanted to see how the burden of work manifests for this type of female representatives that activated in a region of a developing country. Are they pleased with the conditions of work? How their life was affected, both from the social point of view and from the family one.

Several working hypotheses were constructed and tested. We wanted to see if Transylvanian women having executive jobs would choose the same position if they could turn back time. Additionally, their family behaviour was assessed, along with changes that occur in their relationships with family, friends and colleagues.

As the results part shows, women retain the desire to have good jobs that are well paid. That is why they are willing to sacrifice their personal life. The analysis reveals that female managers that did not have a family at the time of getting this position tend to delay building one. Moreover, the time spent with family and friends is also sacrificed as most of them also have to work at home, even during week-ends.

The next part of the paper presents a short overview of the specific literature. Part three is devoted to data, methodology and working hypotheses. Results are presented in the fourth part of the study, followed by conclusions. In the conclusions part we chose to present the opinions of the women questioned in respect to the position of the woman in the Romanian society, in general, and the issues related to women in leading positions, in particular.

## Literature Review

**T**HE RELATIONSHIP between demographic and social issues and female employment is the subject of many studies. This is due to the present trends of population aging that puts pressure on social assistance systems (Del Boca et al, 2003). Consequently, special attention is paid to the correlation between fertility and female employment. Results differ a lot, depending on the social features of each country. In the case of European countries, for example, the correlation between the two has changed from negative to positive in the 1980s (Del Boca et al, 2003; Ahn & Mira, 2002; Engelhardt et al, 2004). However, spatial clustering appears between North and South. Low fertility appears in more traditionalist, Southern countries, where, on one side, female participation rates on the labour market are low (Da Rocha & Fuster, 2006) and, on the other side, more full-time jobs are available for women. For the Northern part, the positive sign is given by high participation rates and higher fertility rates. A reason is given by de Oliveira et al. (2010) who show that for European countries fertility is strongly correlated with the opportunity to have a part-time job (also in Meulders et al, 1994; Bardasi & Gornick, 2000). Another reason is obtained through econometric modelling and presented by Da Rocha & Fuster (2006) – women delay births until reaching an optimum level of compensations. Derived from these results, low fertility is also expected for women with managerial positions, as this type of jobs not only that is full-time, but it also requires additional work and implication. Interesting to see is the fact that most of the studies on the relationship between fertility and female labour participation take into account other factors than the type of job, even though the methods used have high quality. A meta-analysis of this is made by Matysiak and Vignoli (2008).

Women have striven over the years to get equal rights to men. After a long period of feminist movements, female representation in top management positions is still low in the world, regardless of the level of development of the country analyzed. Henrekson (2009) points out that among the developed countries, only 27% of the Austrian managers are women, while France has the highest share. Additionally, female leadership in the top firms is extremely poor, both in the US and other developed economies. For example, only 11% of the top executive positions in the largest publicly traded corporations in the European Union are females, while they hold only 4% of the CEO or president of board of directors positions (van Eupen, 2009). The study presents an overview of the literature on female leadership. Out of the factors outlined by Henrekson and Stenkula (2009) in his study for this situation we mention the problem of fertility seen through the way developing a career can be combined with building a family. In their desire to have better paid jobs, women are often obliged to experience negative situations related to childbearing (Gatrell, 2013). Gatrell (2013) points out that only 5 out of 27 mothers with leadership positions in UK experienced more malleable maternity policies than expected. The rest of them felt “marginalized and undervalued”. The issue is even more problematic in more traditionalist countries, where discrimination against women is even higher (Kermani & Rajabzadeh, 2013), as the speed of change is practically nil. Women have begun occupying elite managerial positions. However, despite the advantages they have in leadership, they are still strongly evaluated in a prejudicial-

ly manner (Eagly & Carli, 2003) The low level of access to education and information reduces opportunities women have and makes most of them remain at the level of family care, adopting the large family demographic behaviour (Campbell et al, 2013). They also deal with the relationship between fertility decline, socioeconomic conditions, education and wealth. More and more studies assess these problems for developing or underdeveloped countries. Schultz (2013), for example, presents differences in types of employment, education and type of area (urban or rural) and their influences on fertility in Ghana. The paper also reveals inequalities between men and women, in what regards education, incomes, etc.

However, research in this field does not cover only the relationship between fertility and female labour participation. Studies have also assessed the influence of mothers' employment on the child and on the well-being of the family. For example, Del Boca et al (2003) find a negative impact on the child (at emotional level), but a positive effect on the household's income and, consequently, on the sum of money spent for the well-being of the child. This is evidence that women are willing to sacrifice their life for the well-being of the family, especially from the monetary point of view, as leadership positions come with higher remuneration.

## Data, Methodology and Working Hypotheses

**D**ATA USED in this study was collected with the help of a questionnaire applied to career women in the North-West Region of Romania. The questionnaire was initially pretested on 15 such women with the goal to identify problems that may arise from sentence formulation and to establish the correct sentence order (including the connections between questions).

The sample is made up of 207 women in leadership positions from the above mentioned geographical area. These were randomly chosen. Initially, 226 questionnaires were collected, but only 207 were entirely completed. The questionnaire was applied from the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2012 to the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2013. Out of the 207 women, 24.6% are managers, 21.3% are directors, 44.9% are heads of department and 9.2% are administrators.

Two types of methods were used for the survey data collection – face-to-face and online, through the e-mail address. Interviewer administration took place at the working place of the subjects.

The questionnaire is made up of 22 questions, both closed-ended and open-ended. Additionally, Likert items were used.

Data analysis procedures (Buiga, 2011) were employed to evaluate the results of the survey and test the following working hypotheses:

*H1: Women in leadership positions maintain the desire to have a successful career after a certain period of time.*

*H2: The development of a career affects family behaviour, i.e. do women still want to have a family (in case they do not have it yet) or still want to have children (again, if they do not have them yet).*

*H3: What is more important for a female leader – family or career, leisure or money?*

*H4: The social and family life of the female leaders is affected by the leadership position.*

*H5: The leadership period changes the beliefs these women have regarding social life.*

*H6: The concepts and beliefs related to social life are influenced by age.*

*H7: The leadership position affects relationships with friends, family and colleagues.*

## Results

**T**HE FIRST results show that if they could turn back time, most of the women would choose the same position (79.7% of the valid sample). Only 5.8% of the women involved in the survey would not choose the actual leading position, while 14.5% are not sure yet.

According to the statistics, female managers work, on average, 9 hours a day. Out of them, 39.1% have to work at home, too, 27.1% have to work on week-ends, but 51.7% claim they work during week-ends only sometimes. Despite this, the majority of the sample is satisfied with the activity, probably due to the financial gains and the social position given by a leadership position. 79.7% of the women questioned claim they would choose again the same management position they hold if they could turn back time. This result has its roots in the desire of many women to have a successful career. *Hypothesis 1* is thus accepted, women retain the desire of a successful career even after a period of time in a management position.

Table 1 presents some descriptive statistics (percentages) of some behavioral variables for each type of leading position.

The *second working hypothesis* is related to the way in which family life is affected by career. Specifically, we were interested to see if leadership is an impediment for having a family or bearing children. Out of the analyzed sample, 65.7% of the women are married, while 5.7% are either widow or divorced. Only 17% of the respondents had the present job before marriage. Out of the single, widow or divorced women, 28.2% claim they have the intention of getting married in the near future, while 25.4% have no such intention. Such a result shows a lower importance of the family aspect.

In what regards the fertility issue, 58.9% of the sample is made up of women with children. Additionally, 71.3% had their children before getting the leading position. The average number of children for the sample is 1.4 for those with children and 0.82 for the entire sample. The average number of children in Romania is 1.3, according to the figures released by the National Institute of Statistics. 36.5% of the women without children intend to have one in the next couple of years, while 22.4% say they have no intention of bearing a child in the near future. The latter result is worrying and emphasizes the tendency of female managers to delay this issue. This tendency is influenced by age, younger women delaying more this event (contingency coefficient  $C = 0.372$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.009). In the same time, the type of leading position does not influence this decision ( $C=0.148$ ,  $p$ -value=0.929).

TABLE 1. Percentages (% computed for each type of management position, individually) of the behavioural variables in relation to the position held

Variables	Director	Manager	Head of department	Administrator
They had other leading positions – Yes	59.1	25.5	18.3	31.6
Have to work extra, at home	45.5	37.3	32.3	63.3
Have to work on week-ends:				
– Yes	25.0	29.4	10.8	47.4
– Sometimes	45.5	51.0	57.0	42.1
For how long are in the present leading position:				
– under 3 years	34.1	49.0	37.6	10.5
– 3-6 years	27.3	33.3	21.5	31.6
– 6-10 years	13.6	15.7	21.5	10.5
– over 10 years	25.0	2.0	19.4	47.4
Age:				
– under 30 years	9.1	43.1	29.0	10.5
– 30-40 years	29.5	43.1	28.0	47.4
– over 40 years	61.4	13.7	43.0	42.1
Education:				
– under 16 years	45.4	31.4	38.7	68.4
– between 16-18 years	27.3	54.9	44.1	26.3
– over 18 years	27.3	13.7	17.2	5.3

SOURCE: *own calculations using SPSS 19.0.*

TABLE 2. The ranking of the social life concepts

Concepts	Ranking				Mean
	1	2	3	4	
Career	17.4%	45.9%	23.2%	13.5%	2.33
Family	79.2%	11.1%	6.3%	3.4%	1.34
Money	1.0%	23.2%	42%	33.8%	3.09
Leisure	2.4%	19.3%	29.0%	49.3%	3.25

SOURCE: *own calculations using SPSS 19.0.*

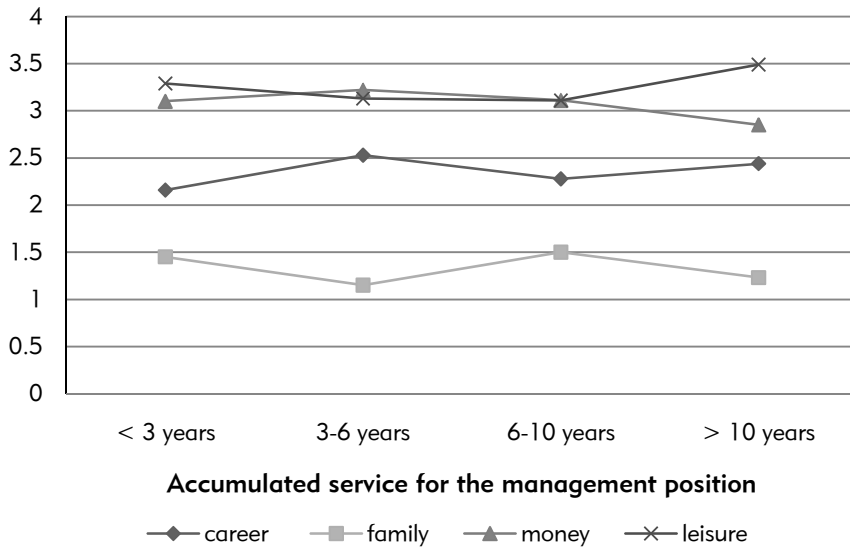
*H3* puts in balance family, career, leisure and money. Table 2 emphasizes the fact that family comes first for 79.2% of the sample, with an average of 1.34. On the second place is to be found the career, with a mean of 2.33 (45.9% of the women have put career on the second place as importance). Money is not a priority, only 1% of the answers were for the first place. Thus, with a mean of 3.09, money comes third, while leisure is the least important – 3.25. The main conclusion is that Romanian women prioritize the concepts of family and career, while money and leisure count less. Such a result has its roots in the woman's position in the Romanian society. It is well known that in the past the woman had to take care of the house and children, in general, while other aspects such as money, career, leisure were in the husband's responsibility. Family remains the most important, with children having their special place, but appears the desire of professional development and fulfilment. This is mostly characteristic for persons with tertiary education, many of the women questioned claiming that any job can be put aside the "mum" job. Leisure and relaxation are not important anymore. Moreover, the desire to have a good job is not that much influenced by the amount of money gained, but by the social position given. The woman is now willing to sacrifice herself for the personal and family ideals.

The 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis was constructed with the intention to evaluate the influence of the time span from getting a certain management position upon the social and family life of these women. First of all, we could see that 30% of them had other leading position before the present one. This situation characterizes mostly women over 40 years (51.6%). The average number of children for women that previously had management positions is 1.01. Bearing in mind the fact that most of them are over 40 years, we can observe a low interest to have more children. Additionally, we have to put into light the fact that 31.6% of the women that previously had other leading positions and are in the age group of 30 – 40 years are unmarried, while 79% of them have no more than 1 child. The conclusion that female managers tend to give a higher importance to career in the detriment of family is, once again, sustained.

The statistical analyses run show that the duration of the leading position influences significantly only the concept of family ( $F=2.758$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.041$ ). For the other social concepts, *H5* is rejected. The highest level of importance for the family concept is to be found in the case of women who have the leading position from 3 to 6 years, followed by the group that is in this position for more than 10 years. Based on the results in figure 1, we can conclude that women that are in a management position for a short period of time consider career as the most important (mean of 2.16), women that have such a position for 3 to 6 years rank first family (mean = 1.15), for the ones that have a seniority of 6 to 10 years in this position career and leisure are the most important, while for those who worked at minimum 10 years in the same leading position, first come money and family.

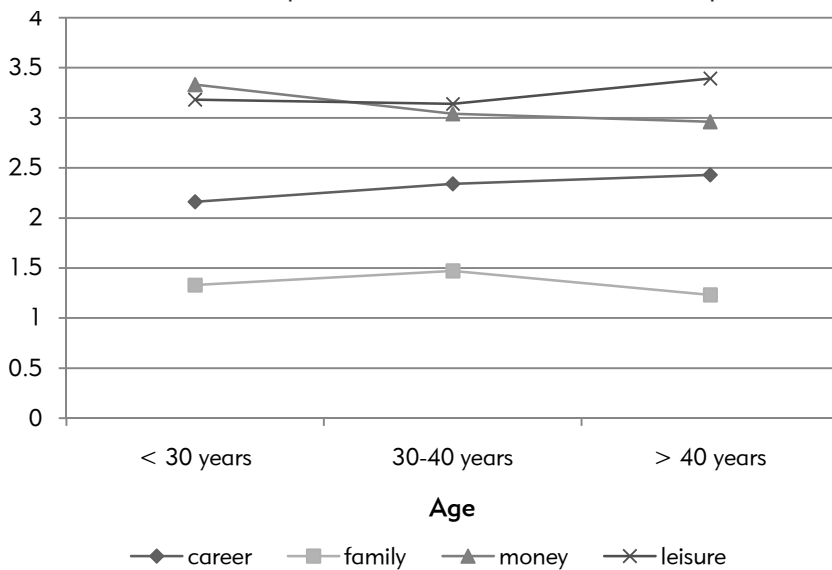
The 6<sup>th</sup> hypothesis deals with the influence of age upon the different social life concepts considered (figure 2). In general, the ranking is the same. On the first place is family, followed by career, money and leisure on the last place. Only attitude towards money is statistically significantly influenced by age ( $F = 3.884$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.022$ ). There is a direct relationship, meaning that the higher the age, the higher the importance of

FIGURE 1. Variation of the importance of the social life concepts in relation to the period since the leading position is occupied



SOURCE: own calculations using SPSS 19.0.

FIGURE 2. Variation of the importance of the selected social life concepts in relation to age



SOURCE: own calculations using SPSS 19.0.

money, in the detriment of leisure. Thus, for young women, under 30, career and leisure are more important, for women between 30 – 40 years of age leisure and money are important, while family is less important in comparison with other age groups. Leading women over 40 give the highest importance to family and money.

The last hypothesis assesses the way in which having a leading managerial position affects the relationship with friends, family and colleagues. For this, we have used a Likert scale were 1 = such a position affects very much these relationships, while 5 = these relationships have not at all been affected. Results are presented in table 3.

TABLE 3. Measuring the intensity of the influence upon social relationships

Likert scale (1–max, 5–min)	Friends	Family	Colleagues
1	2.9%	3.9%	3.4%
2	8.2%	7.7%	4.3%
3	24.6%	15.9%	21.3%
4	18.8%	31.4%	31.9%
5	45.4%	41.1%	39.1%

SOURCE: *own calculations using SPSS 19.0.*

Considering levels 1 and 2 as high intensity, 11.6% of the women questioned consider the management position affects the relationship with the family, 11.1% with friends and only 7.7% with colleagues. When assessing individually for types of relationships, we can conclude that persons that have this position for less than 3 years (15.6%) and those that have it for more than 10 years (12.8%) appreciate their relationship with their friends was affected. Almost the same situation is to be found for the group of young females, under 30 years of age (14.5%) and of the ones over 40 (13.4%). In what regards the relationship with the family, the situation is as follows: 15% of the women that have a managerial position for maximum 6 years claim this relationship was affected. The same situation for those in the age group 30 – 40 (17.1%). Relationship with colleagues is affected for young persons (14.6%) and for those having this job for a short period of time (11%) (maximum 3 years). In conclusion, having a leading position when young would affect both the relationship with friends (less free time) and with colleagues (who accept harder a young boss). If the age is between 30 to 40 years and have a managerial position for a longer period, the relationship with the family has to suffer. If over 40, the relationship with friends has to suffer, especially if one also has a family, with children, that are important.

Another aspect that has to be considered when analyzing the implications upon social relationships is the one that some women have to work extra, at home or during weekends. Significant differences were found between persons that work supplementary and the ones that do not do it. The most affected is considered to be the relationship with family.



TABLE 4. Percentages of the female managers whose social relations were affected by extra work

	Extra work at home		Extra work during weekends		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Sometimes
Friends	16.1%	7.9%	11.1%	9.1%	12.2%
Family	21.0%	5.6%	26.7%	5.4%	8.4%
Colleagues	13.5%	4.0%	4.4%	7.2%	9.3%

SOURCE: *own calculations using SPSS 19.0.*

## Conclusions

THE FOLLOWING conclusions can be drawn based on the above presented results and on the answers women in managerial positions in the North-West Region of Romania gave at the open-ended question related to the position of the woman in the Romanian society.

We live in a globalized world, in which women have much more rights than 100 years ago and many anti sex discrimination measures were implemented all over the world (especially in the developed countries – access to education, to the internet, to bibliographical resources, etc). With all these, women in the present sample claim that in Romania the woman is still perceived as inferior to man and is not appreciated at her real value. The woman is not credible, is paid less than the man for the same job, is not accepted in some fields and there still are persons that use stereotypes such as “The woman belongs in the kitchen” or “This is not a woman’s job”. In such conditions, they sustain it is very hard for a woman to succeed in having a career and that the woman deserves a reconsideration of her position in the society (taken into account her qualities). They are obliged to face many challenges, to fight with the mentality, to demonstrate they are able to do what they want to. They have to make a lot of compromises and cross many bridges for fulfill something. Additionally, especially in politics and the economic area, successful women have to counter fight many prejudices and are often considered as being successful due to some physical features. This, in the detriment of education, studies, dedication or efficiency, even though in most of the cases their activity is at least as efficient as the men’s. Moreover, women are more equilibrated. Some women find an explanation in this the fact that we were educated with the mentality that the woman has to dedicate herself to family and household. Additionally, in Romania, and not only, a woman that wants to have a child is considered as incapable to have a managerial position. On other hand, many male representatives want to have a dedicated wife, devoted entirely to them and the family, without too much independence, professional responsibilities and so on. Another opinion found among the answers is that the Romanian woman is not appreciated at the level of the European civilization standard. Has responsibilities and burdens (in society and in family) much higher in respect to the same criterion. All these women consider there is the need for a change in mentality.

On the other hand, an important number of opinions have been expressed that women nowadays have begun playing a very important role in society. Moreover, the woman is con-

sidered more and more as equal to the man, or, at least, with equal professional chances. There are women that say they have encountered no difficulty in their professional activity and that they have been respected and appreciated according to their professional skills. They sustain that through work and consciousness, the woman can occupy a privileged place in society. Some of them have pointed out they have never felt disadvantaged in their professional relationships because of their sex. Additionally, they succeeded in combining family with career, being in the same time mothers, wives, managers, but especially colleagues and friends. These women demonstrate it is possible in the same time to take care of the house and family and build a career, emphasizing that women can show the same level of responsibility and capacity as a man. However, an important share of those women state that having a decision position was in the detriment of family and friends due to the lack of time. The same reason led to an increase in the average age of having a family, postponing the moment of birth. Women that consider their position equal to the man claim that everything is related to the woman's capacity to obtain what she wants. The road can be difficult, but chances to succeed are directly related to the level of implication.

The general conclusion is that the role of the woman is more and more important and that she begins being appreciated at her real value. Women involve more and more in the decisional part, the existence of child is not always an impediment for a career, but it depends very much on the field of activity and on the degree of supportiveness from the part of the family and close friends.

The present analysis has revealed that, in their attempt to earn more and gain more respect in society, women are willing to sacrifice their personal life. A leading position requires extra work that prevents women to spend more time with their family and friends. Consequently, both the social and family parts have to lose when an executive position is achieved. Additionally, results of the present research have shown that women in such situations tend to postpone building a family provided they do not have one at the time of getting the position.



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### Abstract

#### Leadership Versus Personal Life for Female Managers. Case study Transylvania

The present paper investigates the influence of leadership upon the lives of the women in such positions in the North-Western Region of Romania. Using a sample of 207 female leaders we test a series of hypotheses meant to assess the way their family and social life has changed after getting the executive position. Results show that regardless of the "price", the majority of the sample would choose the same position. This puts into light the fact that women are willing to sacrifice their personal life in order to have the status and money brought by being in the top management. Additionally, women tend to delay the moment of having a family provided this did not happen before becoming a leader. The relationships with friends and family are affected as this type of women has to work extra at home, even during week-ends. We also asked the participants to the survey to rank the importance of family, career, leisure and money. In the end, instead of conclusions, we present the opinions of the women managers related to the position of the woman in Romania, in general, and of the woman in top executive positions, in particular.

### Keywords

leadership, female, Transylvania, family, beliefs, statistic analysis